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THE UNITARIAN

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Blake's illustration to Job, "Then God spake out of the whirlwind."

WILLIAM BLAKE BI-CENTENARY

William Blake is probably known to the average church-goer to-day as the author of "Jerusalem" ("And did those feet in ancient time..."). He may also be recognised by some as the author of a poem beginning "Tyger, tyger, burning bright," and also, perhaps, as the author of another hymn in most hymn-books, beginning "To mercy, pity, peace and love all pray in their distress." What William Blake really meant by "And did those feet..." is still probably a mystery to most people who sing the words, for the word-symbols that Blake used have to be diligently studied and Blake's thought is full of symbolism. Even the "Satanic mills" are not to be taken at their face value, but stand for human systems of thought that Blake took to be holding humanity in subjection.

Blake was more than a poet, and more than an artist, though his drawings and paintings were wonderfully powerful. He was a prophet, and a prophet ahead of his time. Many of his ideas are in tune with modern humanistic thinking. His God was no hearsay God, but the power revealed in the terrible mystery of human life with all its the "tyger") and the aspiring myster yof human life with all its qualities and faults. We sing with him

"For mercy has a human form,
Pity a human face,
And love, the human form divine,
And peace, the human dress,"

and we reverence the divine in human nature. But Blake was not simply a fair weather worshipper, turning a blind eye to evil and horror. Tucked away among his other poems we come across the verse

"Cruelty has a human form,
And jealousy a human face,
Terror the human form divine,
And secrecy the human dress."

And these contrasting verses had to be reconciled. No wonder Blake studied the Book of Job, and drew his illustrations for it. The drawing shown above is Blake's version of the mystery of God speaking to Job and his friends out of the terrifying whirlwind. Blake was one who wrestled with all the hard facts of existence, and worshipped the ultimate mystery.

This bi-centenary year is being celebrated with a Blake Exhibition. Along with the William Blake Bi-Centenary Committee we have issued a finely produced large-sized Christmas card showing Blake's Nativity scene. Sample copies may be had for 1s. each, and special terms will be quoted for quantities. Orders may be sent to the Editor, Dunham Road Parsonage, Altrincham, Cheshire.

THE SECRET GARDEN

By Joyce Hazlehurst

One of my favourite children's books is Frances Hodgson Burnett's "The Secret Garden." A rich man had a beautiful wife to whom he gave a small walled-in garden in the middle of his large grounds. One day she fell from a tree in her garden and afterwards died. In his bitter grief, the man locked up the garden, buried the key to its door, and went abroad.

Ten years later a lonely little girl called Mary, who had come to live in the house, discovered the neglected garden and introduced to its wild beauty Colin, the spoilt invalid boy of the wealthy man. Mary pushed Colin there in his wheelchair, unknown to others. The two children called it "The Secret Garden" and delighted in entering a new and hidden world within its walls. Colin learnt to exercise his limbs there and finally walked again. Gradually the children invited more and more friends to enter with them into their secret garden, till at last the unhappy father himself became its guest—and convert.

Sometimes I think of churches as secret gardens, secret, yet openly secret, where all are invited to come and find blessedness, and healing. Nowadays, alas, going to church may be a grim and painful duty. If we worry about empty pews and church finance during a service, we shall come away with set and worried faces. Yet God, I am sure, means us to relax in church and find His Blessedness. A church is meant to be a secret garden of sunshine, songs of birds, trailing roses and soft green grass—a place where broken spirits may be healed, and go thence back into the world with renewed strength and courage. "The Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought places, and make strong thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden." (Isaiah 58, v. 11).

HUCKLOW HAPPENINGS

The 1957 Holiday Programme

Our "Unitarian Holiday Centre," at Great Hucklow, midway between Buxton with its lime quarries and its mineral springs and Sheffield with its steel works, and claiming a greater peace and beauty than either, has had to face a severe financial crisis, like many other worthy institutions. In spite of raising the charges for the 1956 season, costs and overheads increased to an even greater extent, so that another heavy deficit was recorded at the end of the year. The suggestion of closing the Children's Holiday Home, which has only a short season of use each year, and whose accounts therefore, are the most difficult to balance, was rejected, and another and much steeper increase in fees (a 50 per cent. rise for the children) was added. This has meant the cancellation of several Sunday School parties, though for the opening week in June (Whit-week) the home was as full as last year with parties from Leicester, Stockton, Walsall, Pendleton, Altrincham and Wythenshawe. The days of very cheap holidays are over, everywhere, unless the holiday-maker will take his own tent and do his own cooking.

Nevertheless while Hucklow has to charge £6 a week for a grown-up's holiday and £3 for a child in the Holiday Home, the standard of accommodation is being steadily improved. Thanks to the institution of the "blanket fund" for which members of Women's Leagues and U.Y.P.L. branches up and down the country have been working through the winter, the stock of blankets for all the homes has been much improved (though we can do with more offers and gifts to build up a really adequate stock for full parties). The kitchens at all the homes have had many improvements carried out to bring them into line with modern requirements. In the adult homes the old hair mattresses have nearly all been replaced by interior sprung mattresses. If prices have gone up, the standard of feeding at Hucklow has gone up also, and it has always been recognised at Hucklow that meals have to be not only well-cooked but substantial in quantity to meet the hefty appetites generated by Hucklow air and altitude. Where else will children or adults get such second helpings?

The Homes are surrounded by some of Derbyshire's loveliest scenery. The variety of rambles or expeditions by cycle, car, or coach is great. True, there isn't a swimming baths within five miles, but what a pretty five miles to walk or drive! But most of all Hucklow is treasured by those who go there as the Unitarian centre. Year by year old friends meet, and new friends are made, coming from Unitarian Churches east, west, north and south. Every week-end conference held at Hucklow brings newcomers to sample its welcoming spirit, and how often they come again. What a calamity it would be for our Unitarian community if Hucklow had to close down!

A few years ago a building fund was raised for a new children's home. Alas, the rise in building costs made the venture quite prohibitive, but the fund is there for another scheme which we shall be hearing about before long. Meanwhile a steady flow of guests is needed to maintain the present position, and plans for improving the adult homes section by section are being tackled. Hucklow as both a holiday centre and a Unitarian conference centre is too valuable an asset to neglect or throw away.

U.Y.P.L. is arranging another inter-racial conference at Great Hucklow from September 13th to 15th.

CHILDREN'S CORNER

All The Fun Of The Fair

The annual Summer Fair was always held on the big field by the school, and this year the Duchess of Thingummy had been asked to perform the opening ceremony. This, naturally, unnerved many people, particularly the Mayor. He was up early on the day and went down to the field to see if all was well. He thought all was *not* well and said so—and the men who were putting everything up decided the Mayor would have been better occupied elsewhere. He kept it up throughout the morning and made himself a complete nuisance.

At ten minutes to three, the Mayor, resplendent, met the Duchess at the gate, from whence he was to conduct her to the platform. He talked nervously, tripped over one or two ropes and eventually paused by a large tent. The Mayor led the Duchess inside and had just said: "Well now, your Grace, this is where we shall...." when the tent collapsed! It seemed odd that only the Mayor and the Duchess were in it at the time! The Mayor fumed his way to the platform, trying to placate the Duchess who was far from pleased. They were shown to the places of honour and the platform was soon filled with other people. It was a lovely day and by the time he had to speak the Mayor had calmed down. His speech was quite jolly; he introduced the Duchess gaily and sat down, well pleased with himself. The Duchess who was now in a similar frame of mind, sailed grandly through her speech, and had reached her final bit: "...and so, therefore, it gives me great pleasure to declare..." when both she and the Mayor disappeared from view! The other occupants of the platform were astonished—and it seemed particularly odd that only the space occupied by the Mayor and the Duchess had given way!

As the Mayor pursued the raging Duchess to the gate, vainly trying to explain, several of the workmen permitted themselves a wide grin. It was thought that the Mayor would not interfere in the future!

I'm not quite sure about these 'symbols' you keep mentioning, dear. Shall we have to bang them at the street corners?

RECOMMENDED

Four more "*Personal Testimonies*" on "*What Unitarianism Means To Me*" have come from the Lindsey Press (2d. each). A Social Worker looks back to religious upbringing by Unitarian parents interested in politics and religious problems, and tells how a faith based on the belief that Jesus was a man and a friend helped to keep social service activities human, remembering that "cases" are people with deep human needs.

A Biochemist tells of his loss of faith in orthodox Non-conformist teachings while maintaining a strong interest in religious matters until at last he came into touch with a Unitarian Chapel, where the undogmatic approach, the idea of developing insights, and the avoidance of fundamental pessimism about the nature of man supplied a rational and helpful faith.

A Trade Union Official denies that his deep belief in Unitarianism is

due to his Unitarian up-bringing. He does not believe in having a "ready-made" attitude of life. He valued his faith because it was a way of life as against an acceptance of dogma, and his faith led him through Trade Union work to try to improve the social condition of the community. Social status should be based on the possession of Christian principles, not on the possession of wealth.

A Church Worker who also inherited Unitarianism, but had a variety of other religious contacts and exeperience of worship in other denominations, tells of a conviction of the importance of organised religion and the value of church attendance as a habit. How Unitarian faith proved a help in making adjustments to new situations, and in times of perplexity and loss, is made clear, and the impulse to work for the good of the community is again brought out.

This is an excellently produced series of leaflets which should be on every church bookstall, and in the pockets of those who want to help "outsiders" to understand where Unitarians find their inspiration.

JESUS, THE MAN

"I can enlist as a disciple of Jesus, the man; but I cannot offer any allegiance to Jesus, the God. The doctrine of his divinity withdraws him from human experience and puts him apart for ever. It was easy for a god to spend thirty years on earth, since that's no time at all in eternity, and anyhow he knew he would rise again; but a young workman who conceived a great idea and tried to pass it on and was crucified for doing so, catches my love and enables me to believe that if I had enough will and strength I could do what he did or some of what he did. I haven't any hope of ever emulating the activities of an immortal and omnipotent deity."

William Lyon Phelps.

NEWS AND VIEWS

OVERSEAS

AUSTRALIA. ADELAIDE has held a successful Brains Trust at which the questions included these: "If it is true that each soul must find its own pathway to God, why have a church?" "At the present time the State is taking a large responsibility for a great part of life. Should then the Church be State-supported?" "If one Church is as good as another, why come from all four corners of the compass to a Church like ours?" The premiss of the last question was strongly denied, and the reason for loyalty to a Unitarian church was vigorously demonstrated. The new Holiday House at SHADY GROVE is now completed after a year's work on Saturdays and some full week-ends. Thanks was expressed to Mr. Daws who took a lead in the whole project, gave up his Saturdays for a year, and did much work at home, taking up the results to Shady Grove on a loaded trailer. It is estimated that a builder's contract would have been £3,500, but the work was done for £1,000. Two tennis courts have been laid out and wired in for £120, a first-class job for which Mr. Rex Furness was chiefly responsible. The new centre is suitable for family holidays and young people's camps.

DENMARK. An interesting moment in this year's General Assembly Meetings was the welcome to Pastor Thorvald Kierkegaard, of the Unitarian Church, Copenhagen, who gave an account of Unitarianism in Denmark. He has a congregation of over 500 members, a vigorous centre of Unitarian witness.

THE CHURCHES

BRIDPORT. The organ has been renovated, and at the recent congregational meeting it was resolved to install electric heating in the chapel.

BRISTOL. LEWIN'S MEAD congregation listened to two tape-recordings after evening service on June 2nd.

The first was a B.B.C. recording of their broadcast "Mary Carpenter, the Children's Friend," and the second was the General Assembly edited tape. The Fellowship of Youth made an expedition to Cardiff on June 2nd and attended evening service there. The members have recently cleaned up and tidied the chapel at Frenchay, and have conducted a service there.

DUDLEY congregation is to experiment for a year with two morning services only in the month, on the first and third Sundays, and the introduction of a quarterly afternoon service, on the fifth Sunday in September, December, March and June. A new set of rules for church management has been adopted.

DONCASTER has started a Men's Fellowship. On June 16th Marion Knight was crowned Rose Queen in succession to Barbara Boulby by MRS. E. D. Davies, of Sheffield.

FLOWERY FIELD. The Whit-Friday walk was accompanied by the Stalybridge Public Band. Members of the Y.P.L. have been helping in an Advance Campaign at MARPLE, visiting the church four times, and distributing 1,000 leaflets. On May 12th they presented a dramatic form of worship, "One Immortal Flame." The newly-formed Scout Troop has held its first week-end training camp, and a second at Whitsuntide.

IRELAND. NEWRY Sunday School has reached a new record of attendance, and a large number of the 40 prizes presented at a special service in April were for a year's perfect attendance. A set of Communion linen has been presented in memory of the Reid and Wharton families. KILLINCHY children presented an Easter pageant including appropriate recitations.

KNUTSFORD enjoyed a fine day for the crowning of the Rose Queen on June 1st. The Women's League has successfully launched a "talents scheme" by which each member starts out with a shilling to be increased by trading, and the popular lines are lemon-curd, jam, cakes, pickles, dress decorations, and growing lettuces. Good work is going on at ALLOSTOCK chapel through the Sunday School, a Daffodil Service being held in April.

LEEDS. MILL HILL Chapel is providing a permanent home on its premises for Dr. Priestley's chair and clock, which have been repaired at a cost of over £20. The Women's League has made new curtains for the stage.

LIVERPOOL. GATEACRE congregation recently took a retiring collection on behalf of the Congregational Church at Farndon whose building was destroyed by fire.

LONDON, HACKNEY. The Sunday School membership is growing under the leadership of the Rev. R. E. Goddard. One member, Hazel McCartney, brought no less than six new members to the school during April. A children's club has been formed which has over 110 members. Arrangements have been made for the centenary service commemorating the opening of the present church building, on July 7th. The congregation was founded in 1665.

LEICESTER AND LOUGHBOROUGH. A united service was held at Loughborough on May 26th at which the chapel was very well filled, about 50 members coming from Leicester either by car or walking through Charnwood Forest. In readiness for the 250th anniversary at the Great Meeting, Leicester, which falls next year, the exterior of the building has just been painted.

MANCHESTER. The District Sunday School Association SPRING FESTIVAL was revived in May after a lapse of six years, and the singing and elocution competitions were held at PENDLETON on May 11th and the Exhibition and Concert at ALTRINCHAM on May 18th. Ten schools entered and there were close finishes in the competitions for the various trophies, the Aggregate

Points Shield going to Pendleton, the R.E.Y.D. vase to Cross Street, the Part II Shield to Altrincham and the Picture to Platt. The Association's annual service on May 20th at PENDLETON was conducted by the Rev. Peter Godfrey, B.A., of Swinton.

MANCHESTER CHURCHES. BLACKLEY made £41 8s. 6d. at a Cake and Apron Sale in May. An advance campaign is planned for MIDDLETON in which district churches are being asked for co-operation. ALTRINCHAM has formed a Junior U.Y.P.L. for younger teen-agers. The Senior Y.P.L. had a day outing to Southport on June 23rd, attending morning service at Portland Street Church. PENDLETON Dramatic Society received a very encouraging criticism for their entry in the Salford Drama Festival which is non-competitive. It was considered a first-class performance.

STAND. Largely owing to the suggestions from Stand Unitarian Sunday School the local united Whit-Friday walk this year was designed primarily for religious witness, and there was no dressing-up for the occasion. An open-air service was arranged in a playing-field, and the Stand School then returned for tea, games and sports arranged by the Men's Club. The Chapel has set a target of £200 for the November Sale, and an additional target of £300 for the Gift Day.

TROWBRIDGE Youth Club has spring-cleaned the schoolroom. The Sunday School has held an "At-Home" to parents and friends, showing them modern teaching methods with an exhibition of expression-work. The new kitchen has been completed.

U.Y.P.L. The South-Eastern Region has held what is claimed to be "the most stimulating Conference in the history of the League." It was decided that rallies mainly planned round a "social" were getting nowhere, the plan for a Social Service conference was the result, with first-rate lectures, and discussions that went on formally or informally until 2 a.m. There was a record number of entries for the U.Y.P.L. National Drama Festival held at Bolton at which STAND branch were the winners with "The Pen of my Aunt." Bury and Platt tied for second place, Stalybridge fourth; also ran Swinton, Halliwell Road (Bolton), Dukinfield, Liverpool (Mill Street), Hindley, Birmingham (Waverley Road) and Horwich.

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1/6 each, by post 1/8. Send for catalogue containing complete list in series.

The Lindsey Press, 15, Gordon Square, London, W.C.1.

ESSEX HALL STONE-LAYING

On June 8th Mrs. Sydney Martineau laid the foundation stone of the new Essex Hall, the headquarters of the General Assembly, and appealed for £13,000 to complete the fund. The Rt. Hon. J. Chuter Ede also spoke, Rev. J. P. Chalk presided, and Dr. Mortimer Rowe offered the dedicatory prayer.

UNITARIANS IN THE NEWS

Lord Street Chapel's oldest member at Oldham is Mr. Wright Turner, who is 91, and recently featured in the "Oldham Evening Chronicle." He lives alone, does his own cooking and housework. He was married at the Old Chapel, Dukinfield 70 years ago and has been a member at Oldham for over 60 years. Oldham's other nonagenarian member is Miss Kate Dornan.

Mr. G. G. Desmond, B.A., of Cheltenham, has celebrated his 90th birthday.

Miss Kathleen Tootill, of Altrincham, Editor of the Canoe Camping Club Magazine, has gone on a canoeing holiday to Iceland where she hopes to meet liberal Christian members of the I.A.R.F. to which a section of the Icelandic church is affiliated.

The Rev. John M. Quirk, of Pudsey and Wakefield has accepted an invitation to Cheltenham and Gloucester.

IT HAPPENS IN THE STATES !

In the U.S.A. people who do church work such as serving as choir members, committee members etc., are allowed to deduct their travelling expenses for such work from their income tax. It counts as a charitable contribution.

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Northern Sunday School Federation

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